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SOUTHERN INFLUENCES UPON HEBREW PROPHECY

BY J. M. POWIS SMITH
University of Chicago

"We know nothing at all about the origin of the Yahweh-religion. Nor do we know anything as to how and when it came to the Israelites." This is the statement of a recent writer upon Israelitish traditions.¹ If the word "know" be taken in any strict sense, this statement is in full accord with the facts. We have many ancient traditions regarding Israelitish beginnings, and recent years have seen the formulation of many hypotheses upon the origins of Israel and of Yahwism. But we are still in the stage of hypothesis and are not likely soon to emerge therefrom, unless new and altogether unexpected evidence should come to hand. In this article attention is invited to one of the most recent hypotheses.

One of the results of the prevalence of the view that Israel's knowledge of Yahweh was obtained from the Kenites was the concentration of scholarly thought upon the South as the birthplace of Hebrew religion. Professor Eduard Meyer and Dr. Bernhard Luther were among the first to emphasize the importance of the southern clans in connection with the origin of Yahwism.² The element of value in the Jerahmeel hypothesis of the brilliant but too imaginative

¹ Viz., Dr. Bernhard Luther, in Eduard Meyer, *Die Israeliten*, u.s.w. (1906), p. 163.

² See *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme*, pp. 84-88, 132 f., 163 ff., 378.

Professor T. K. Cheyne was its emphasis upon the Negeb region as the original home of Yahwism. My friend and colleague, Professor D. D. Luckenbill, recently published an article in the *American Journal of Theology*,¹ in which he brought forth cogent considerations in support of the same general contention. It is the purpose here to emphasize once more certain data pointing in this direction.

For purposes of orientation let me briefly summarize some facts brought out in a recent article of mine.² There were Hebrews in Canaan at a very early date. These Hebrews were living in the midst of a civilization that was shot through with Babylonian culture. They could not escape it. The legal basis of their economic and social life was substantially the Code of Hammurabi. As a matter of fact the Covenant Code, which is the earliest code of Hebrew law, shows so many points of contact with the Code of Hammurabi as to make inevitable the conclusion that the latter contributed a large proportion of the contents of the former.³ This fact makes it unnecessary to postpone the emergence of the Covenant Code till so late a date as is ordinarily done. The probability is rather that the Covenant Code in its earliest form arose relatively early. The ethics of the Covenant Code is not on so lofty a plane as to call for the preaching of great prophets in preparation for it. It represents rather that type of legislation which would be indispensable to the conduct of life in a civilized agricultural community. There is no reason, therefore, in the nature of things why the kind of life reflected in the Covenant Code should not run back to the second or third generation after the first Hebrew settlement in Canaan.

But the Old Testament tradition regarding the origin of Yahwism lays emphasis upon Moses, Egypt, and Sinai-Kadesh. It is increasingly difficult to find any place for experiences represented by these names until some centuries after the first Hebrew settlement in Canaan. Further, the attitude of the higher religion of the Hebrews is always one of protest against things Canaanitish and insistence upon whole-hearted allegiance to Yahweh, who is evidently not

¹ "On Israel's Origins," *American Journal of Theology*, XXII (1918), 24-53.

² "Some Problems in the Early History of Hebrew Religion," *AJSL*, XXXII (1915), 81-97.

³ See C. H. W. Johns, *The Relations between the Laws of Babylonia and the Laws of the Hebrew Peoples* (1914), p. 49.

identified closely with Canaan. The logical conclusion from the foregoing facts is that the religion of Yahweh was a relatively late element in the developing experience of the Hebrews and that it owed much to the influences with which it came into contact in the regions to the south of Judah.

As indicative of this, we may first cite the several lines of evidence pointing to some connection with Egypt. The strength of the tradition tying Israel up to Egypt has been perhaps too heavily discounted in our recent critical studies. We certainly do not need to defend all the legendary material that has gathered around the Egyptian sojourn and the Exodus in order to make the tradition historically significant. Whatever may or may not have taken place in Egypt, the experience left a profound impression on the Hebrew consciousness. Practically nobody now denies the fact of a Hebrew sojourn in Egypt. That sojourn being granted, we cannot a priori deny the possibility, yea, the probability, of some Egyptian influence upon the thought and religion of Israel. In the full light of history Israel always showed itself a ready disciple of the successive schools of thought or strata of civilization with which she came into contact. There is no reason to suppose that this capacity to learn from others was lacking in the Israel of an earlier day. It is practically certain, therefore, that when Israel left Egypt she took with her, whether or not she "spoiled the Egyptians" in the traditional sense, an appreciable amount of Egyptian culture. But culture includes religion, and, particularly in the ancient world, religion and culture or civilization are inextricably intermingled. That the Hebrews could have been ignorant of the religious rites and institutions of the Egyptians is thus almost inconceivable. Moses need not, of course, have been "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," but, on the other hand, he could not have been an *ignoramus* on that subject. This would hold true, but in differing degrees, whether the Hebrew contingent in Egypt were slaves in the private and public service of the Egyptians or were but a group of herdmen or shepherds located in the pasture lands of Goshen. They could not even there have wholly escaped contact with the life of Egypt, their immediate neighbor.

But it was not necessary for the Hebrews to go to Egypt in order to learn from her. Egypt was continually sending her influence

abroad. The copper mines of Sinai were worked by Egypt for centuries and it was necessary for her to keep garrisons on guard over them. The clans of the Negeb were immediately accessible to Egyptian influence. The more southern cities of Canaan thus far opened up by excavation reveal clearly the extent to which Egyptian culture permeated that region.¹ Scarabs, amulets, women's head-dresses, lotus decorations,² vases, and the like attest the influence of Egypt from the earliest times down to the twelfth century and beyond. Glass was imported into Syria-Palestine from Egypt between 1400 and 1000 B.C., and the glass vases found by the excavators are decorated in the Egyptian style characteristic of that period.³ Figures of the Egyptian goddesses Bes and Isis were found at Beth-Shemesh.⁴ Bes was found also at Gezer and as far north as Taanach.⁵ These deities together with Ptah are among the most frequently encountered idols in Palestinian excavations. At Lachish (*Tell el-Hesi*) a temple of the Egyptian goddess Hathor was built in the first city to occupy the site, somewhere between 1500 and 2000 B.C.; while about 1400 B.C. the governor of Lachish recognized the suzerainty of Egypt, and Egyptian scarabs of that period were found in the ruins.⁶ Gezer was under the authority of Egypt as early as the reign of Thutmose III (*ca.* 1475 B.C.), and during the Tell el-Amarna period, and again in the reign of Merneptah; while scarabs extending all the way from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Dynasty (2000–1205 B.C.) attest continuous Egyptian influence.⁷ A building-stone from the thirteenth century B.C. was found there with the Egyptian hieroglyph for gold inscribed upon it.⁸ An Egyptian lotus-shaped incense-burner, found as far north as *Tell el-Mutesellim*

¹ See F. J. Bliss and R. A. S. Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine during the Years 1898–1900* (1902), pp. 136, 139, 143, 153 f.; and W. M. F. Petrie, *Tell el-Hesi* (1891), p. 25.

² My colleague, Professor Breasted, calls my attention to the fact that the use in decorative art of motifs from the vegetable world, such as the lotus, the palm, and the papyrus, originated in Egypt and spread throughout the Mediterranean world. See, e.g., the Phoenician bronze platters found at Nimrud, at Praeneste in Latium, and elsewhere. Cf. W. M. F. Petrie, *Egyptian Decorative Art* (1895), pp. 5 ff., 61 ff.; G. Maspero, *Egyptian Art* (1913), pp. 160–71.

³ See P. S. P. Handcock, *The Archaeology of the Holy Land* (1916), pp. 271 f.

⁴ See *PEFQSt.* (1911), pp. 170 ff.

⁵ See Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities*, Fig. 80; and E. Sellin, *Tell Ta'annek*, Fig. 99.

⁶ See Bliss, *A Mound of Many Cities*.

⁷ See Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer*, II (1912), 314–30.

⁸ See Handcock, *Latest Light from Bible Lands*, p. 221.

(Megiddo), in a stratum representing the period *ca.* 1200–1000 B.C.,¹ is especially significant of Egyptian influence just about the time when the southern clans were vigorously expanding their borders. A similar object was found at Gezer in remains from the period 1000–600 B.C.² The Pharaoh Merneptah not only defeated Israel in southern Palestine, but seems also to have left his name attached to several well-known places in Judah. For the brilliant interpretation by Count von Calice,³ of the phrase *בְּעֵץ מֵי נַפְתָּח* (Josh. 15:9; 18:15) as Fountain of Merneptah, seems altogether probable; and an Egyptian officer's journal strengthens the probability by speaking of a fortress, a town, and a well as carrying the name of Merneptah.⁴ Such evidence speaks volumes for Egyptian influence in the south of Palestine in the thirteenth century B.C.

One of the most fertile sources of influence on the part of Egypt upon Hebrew life and thought was certainly at hand in the Egyptian temples that were built in foreign lands. For example, on the peninsula of Sinai was the great temple of Serabit.⁵ Thutmose III (1501–1447 B.C.) and Ramses III (*ca.* 1198–1167 B.C.) tell of temples of Amon in the land of Zahi, located in the land of Canaan, to one of which "the Asiatics of Retenu (= Syria) came bearing their tribute before it, for it was divine."⁶ A temple at Lachish has already been mentioned; and there probably was one at Gezer also in the thirteenth century B.C.⁷ Splendid temples with their dramatic ritual and numerous priesthood would constitute most concrete and fascinating exponents of the religious ideas and practices of Egypt. The surrounding population could scarcely escape learning something of Egyptian thought through such objective and attractive representations. That the Hebrews were not slow to borrow such things finds illustration in the fact that, at a later date, Ahaz installed in the temple of Yahweh a new altar which was frankly copied from an altar that he saw in Damascus when he paid his respects to Tiglath-pileser IV (II Kings 16:10–16). One of the Amarna letters from

¹ See G. Schumacher, *Tell el-Mutesellim*, I (1908), Frontispiece, Fig. 90, and 126 f.

² See Macalister, *PEFQS*. (1908), p. 211.

³ *OLZ*, VI (1903).

⁴ Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, III, §§ 631, 633, 634.

⁵ See Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (1906), pp. 72–108.

⁶ See Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II, §§ 455–58; IV, § 219.

⁷ Hancock, *Latest Light from Bible Lands*, p. 221.

Palestine to the king of Egypt reminds the king that "the gods of the king of the land of Egypt, our lord, dwell in Dunip," the writer's city.¹ The prohibitions of the use of swine's flesh were so similar in Egypt and among the Hebrews as to make the dependence of the Hebrew practice very probable.²

Among other intimations of Egyptian influence, we note the name "Jacob" itself. This name occurs on a scarab as that of one of the Hyksos Pharaohs. Professor Breasted ventures to suppose that this Pharaoh and the Hebrew Jacob may have been identical.³ Without going as far as that we may yet suspect that the two Jacobs were closely related, that the Hebrew Jacob did not arise in entire independence of his Egyptian cognate. Moving along the same lines we find the name "Moses" (מֹשֶׁה) perhaps best accounted for as an Egyptian word; cf. Thutmose, Ahmose, Ramses, etc.⁴ Possibly we may see some early Egyptian influence also in the Hebrew use of incantations and spells. Unfortunately we have scarcely any material of that sort from early Israel, not necessarily that there was nothing of the kind practiced, but rather that the later and purer religious consciousness eliminated almost everything of the kind from the records. The magical use of such formulas was common in later Judaism, and in view of the widespread practice of that sort of thing in the ancient world all around Israel we must posit its existence in early Israel too. For the presence of such incantations in early Egypt we cite, by way of illustration merely, serpent-charms from the Pyramid texts, viz., "Recite: 'Kbb-hy-ty-ty-by-ty-šš, son of Hyfg't, that is thy

¹ See J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, No. 59, ll. 9 f.

² See W. Max Müller in Benzinger's *Archäologie* (2d ed.), p. 450.

³ See Breasted, *A History of the Ancient Egyptians* (1908), p. 181.

⁴ On the interchange of Egyptian š with Hebrew š cf. Müller in Gesenius-Buhl, *Handwörterbuch*¹⁶, s.v. מֹשֶׁה; Erman, *Aeg. Gram.*³, § 114; and Albright, *AJSL*, XXXIV (1918), p. 90. The fact is that Egyptian š is represented by either ש or ס in Semitic in words that are common to the two groups of languages (e.g., *rs*, *rēšu*, ראש, msjt, מִשְׁתָּה); that Semitic proper names with ש are transliterated in Egyptian by š (e.g., š km, שֶׁכֶם; šngr, שֶׁנְגֶר; pršt, פֶּלֶשֶׁת; 'išr, אִשְׂרָאֵל; 'štrt, עֶשְׂתֶּרֶת; 'iškrn, אִשְׁקֶלֶן); but that in the few Egyptian names and words transliterated into Semitic, Egyptian š is represented by Semitic ס (e.g., רַעַמְסֵס, Exod. 1:11; פִּנְחָס, I Sam. 4:4, 11, 17, 19; אֹסִירִיס=Osiris, *CIS*, II, 122, 123, 141). It should be noted, however, that the known cases of š transliterated are very few in all, and that it is probable that were we to have a larger number we should have ס and ש both representing š. The absence of ש is probably purely accidental. This would accord with the looseness in the interchange of sibilants within the Semitic languages themselves.

name''";¹ and "metej! metej! matej! matej! e! e! e! his mother, his mother! mitej! mitej!"² These charms are concatenations of unintelligible syllables and sounds, the mere repetition of which has magical potency. One can but wonder whether or not there lies something of that sort behind Isa. 28:10, 13, **כִּי צוֹ לָצוֹ צוֹ לָצוֹ** **קוֹ לָקוֹ קוֹ לָקוֹ**; and even behind the ordinary mourning formula given in Jer. 22:18, viz., **הֲוֵי אָהֳרִי וְהֲוֵי אֶהְיֶה . . .**³

Turning to more tangible evidence of Egypt's influence upon early Israelitish thought, we at once think of the tale of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The fundamental motif here and the way of working it out are too nearly identical with the popular Egyptian tale of Two Brothers⁴ for us to entertain any thought of independent literary origin. This old story was certainly brought over into the region of the Negeb from the valley of the Nile.⁵ If this much came from Egypt, it would be absurd to say that nothing more of the same general sort was imported from the same source.

In like manner we find in Egypt itself a document known as the Tale of Sinuhe. This is the narrative of the travels and experiences, real or imaginary, of an Egyptian who represents himself as having lived for a long time in Syria and writes this record of his life there for the edification of his own countrymen. Through such wanderers and fugitives as this, if by no other agencies, much knowledge of things and thoughts Egyptian would be carried across into the Negeb. Indeed, Sinuhe distinctly says that he found Egyptians in Syria and that the Egyptian tongue was in use there. On the other

¹ See *Pyr.* (ed. Sethe), p. 240.

² See *Pyr.* (ed. Sethe), p. 236, with Erman's comment in *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XXXIX (1912), 962.

³ Cf. Erman, *Aeg. Rel.*, pp. 154, 156; and J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantations from Nippur* (1913), pp. 114 f.

⁴ G. Möller, *Hieratische Lesestücke*, II. Cf. the widespread currency of the story of Ahikar, the original home of which was clearly Assyria; and yet it was favorite literature in Aramaic among the Jews on the upper Nile in the fifth century B.C.

⁵ H. Gunkel (*Genesis* [3d ed., 1910], pp. 420 ff., and *Reden und Aufsätze* [1913], p. 133) prefers a derivation of this story from India or Persia. But while the points of agreement with the Egyptian tale are not numerous and detailed, they are hardly more so with the Indian and Persian forms. The Egyptian origin is the more probable by reason of (1) geographical proximity, (2) the location of the episode in Egypt, (3) the fact that the story occurs in the J document, not in E, (4) the lack of any assured contact with India or Persia at so early a period. The Hebrews were not slavish borrowers, but enriched or purified whatsoever they took.

hand, we know that entry into and residence in Egypt were easy for Semites in certain periods of history,¹ and this would be a fertile source of information on things Egyptian for the regions whence these travelers came and whither they returned.

Other hints of Egyptian influence upon the Hebrew clans of the South are not wanting. The name of "Phinehas," the son of Eli, priest at Shiloh, is Egyptian and points to some Egyptian connections with the Levitical priesthood of Yahweh at Shiloh, the northern shrine.² The practice of circumcision likewise is probably best explained in accordance with the Old Testament statement (Josh. 5:9) as having come to Israel from Egypt, where it was widely practiced as early as the Pyramid Age.³ The Ark of the Covenant, too, may have descended from an Egyptian ancestry. Portable arks of this kind were used both in Babylonia and in Egypt. But the association of the Ark with Sinai points rather to Egyptian influence than to Babylonian. Each of the Egyptian temples on Asiatic soil (see p. 5) would have an ark for its god, and on this the god would regularly be carried in procession.

Attention has frequently been called of recent years to the general resemblance between a certain kind of literature in ancient Egypt and the prophetic literature of the Hebrews. In addition to the resemblances to prophecy afforded by the writings of the Egyptian wise men and seers which I have indicated elsewhere,⁴ I wish to emphasize here another fact. Prophecy of some kind or other was known throughout the Semitic world; but only in Israel and in Egypt is it characterized by the same spirit, the same outlook. Only in these two literatures of the ancient world is there found that social passion which still stirs us as we read. These old Egyptians were moved to denunciation as they looked upon the sufferings and the disorders of society. They hoped for a new social order bringing relief from the burdens of the old one, whose defects and perversities they analyzed with unshrinking courage. Other men in other parts of the

¹ Breasted, *History of Egypt* (2d ed., 1908), pp. 187, 447 ff.

² Lauth, *ZDMG*, XXV, 139; Nestle, *Eigennamen*, p. 112; Spiegelberg, *ZDMG*, LIII, 634; Nöldeke and Erman, *EB*, p. 3304; Gesenius-Buhl¹⁶, s.v.; Meyer, *Die Israeliten*, p. 450.

³ Gunkel, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, II (1902), pp. 13-21; Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

⁴ See my *Prophet and His Problems* (1914), pp. 16-35.

ancient world may have felt the same emotions and shared the same thoughts, but only in Egypt and in Israel did there grow up a literature expressing this point of view. This apparent uniqueness makes it more than probable that Hebrew prophecy was profoundly influenced by the earlier Egyptian literature. I suspect that this partial dependence of Hebrew prophecy upon Egyptian accounts for an otherwise obscure situation in the history of Hebrew prophecy. The earliest Hebrew prophets, such as Deborah, Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Elijah, and Elisha, left no great literature behind them, nor apparently did they produce any. The first of the great writing prophets is Amos. He marks a new era in Hebrew thought and literature. He comes forward, however, not bearing the distinctive marks of a pioneer in the field of literature. He is master of the grand style; he wields a fully developed prophetic vocabulary; and he reveals literary prophecy at its first appearance in Israel, not as a tiny trickling stream just leaving the source, but as a mighty river in full course. All his predecessors in Israel were from the North; he came from the South. Is it not reasonable to suppose that he represents a new impulse arising in the South somewhere about the time of David and gradually working its way northward? And is it not also probable that that southern impulse owed much to contact with Egyptian life and literature?¹

¹ It may be said that Egyptian influence upon the origin and nature of Hebrew prophecy is rendered unlikely by the fact that the literature of social unrest arose in Egypt during the period of the middle kingdom (2106-1788 B.C.) and that the social movement subsided immediately thereafter, thus leaving a long period to elapse before ethical prophecy arose in Israel. But even if the social interest did subside in Egypt, it does not follow that the literature it produced ceased to circulate. We know that certain documents circulated for centuries; e.g., the Tale of Two Brothers, which was composed in very ancient times, but is known to us from a papyrus written ca. 1200 B.C. under Sethos II (see Möller, *Hieratische Lesestücke* [1910], p. 1). But coming to the kind of literature which concerns us directly we find in an appendix to A. H. Gardiner's *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage* (1909), pp. 95-112, a little text containing certain meditations on the social order by a priest of Heliopolis under Sesostris II (1906-1887 B.C.). The existing copy of the text, however, was made about four hundred years later, showing the hold that this type of literature had upon the Egyptian mind. In like manner, the counsel of Amenemhet to his son Sesostris I (1880-1935 B.C.) was kept in circulation and was copied in the latter days of Ramses II (1292-1225 B.C.). Again, the precepts of Ptah-hotep purport to have been composed toward the end of the Fifth Dynasty (2750-2625 B.C.), but they exist in various papyri, ranging in date from the Twelfth Dynasty (2000-1788 B.C.) to the close of the Hyksos period (ca. 1575 B.C.). Indeed, Maspero would put one tablet as late as the Twenty-second Dynasty (ca. 945-745 B.C.; see G. Jéquier, *Le Papyrus Prisse* [1911], pp. 9 f., and A. H. Gardiner, in the Earl of Carnarvon's *Five Years' Excavations at Thebes* [1912], pp. 36 f.). The Narrative of the Prefect Kaqemna reaches back to the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty (2900-2750 B.C.), but

What the late President Francis Brown said in his excellent treatment of *The Decline of Prophecy* is, of course, often true.

When a new vein is struck the first workers in it are fresh, vigorous, and often compact in style. They are impelled by a force within them. They have no models; they themselves establish the standard. There is no suggestion of imitation in them, for they have none to imitate. They may be abrupt, daring, lacking finish, but they are themselves, and their own strength carries them, without self-assertion or display. The late comers, even when equally sincere, and of dimensions as large, are of necessity somewhat dominated by the standard already set. Their style has something secondary in it. It grows diffuse.¹

But the dependence of the Hebrew prophets upon Egyptian predecessors is in no sense a slavish imitation. It is rather in the nature of the adoption of a point of view and a technique. The touch of Egypt upon the soul of Israel is rather like that of the tiny electric spark upon the powerful explosive. The relationship of the Hebrew prophets to their predecessors is like that of Shakespeare to those who went before him. He took their materials and transformed them by the touch of his immortal genius. He borrowed indiscriminately on every hand, but he made what he borrowed forever his own by the magic of his skill and the grandeur of his matchless style. So likewise did the prophets. Whatever they may have owed to Egypt, they placed upon it the stamp of immortality. They lifted it out of the levels of superstition and materialism into the high altitudes of a religion of unsurpassed ethical and spiritual beauty and power. They forever enshrined it in the heart of a world-literature and a world-religion.

has come down to us in a papyrus prepared almost a thousand years later (so Jéquier, *op. cit.*, p. 9). A precept connected with the installation of a vizier is said to have originated in the period of the Third to the Eighth dynasties (2980-2445 B.C.), but the existing document was found in the grave of a vizier of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1580-1350 B.C.; see K. Sethe, *Die Einsetzung des Veziers unter der 18. Dynastie* [1909], p. 15). So also *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* exists in several papyri, representing different times (see F. Vogelsang, *Kommentar zu den Klagen des Bauern* [1913], pp. 2, 8; F. Vogelsang und A. H. Gardiner, *Die Klagen des Bauern* [1908], pp. 6 f.; P. E. Newberry, *Amherst Papyri* [1899], pp. 10, 18). Thus there seems to be every likelihood that the Hebrews of the Negeb did not lack sources of information regarding the spirit and content of the social movement in Egypt. That a movement should die out on its native soil and spring into new life elsewhere is a familiar phenomenon, seen in the history of Greece and Rome and again in the migration of Christianity from Asia and Africa to Europe.

¹ See *Essays in Modern Theology and Related Subjects—A Testimonial to C. A. Briggs* (1911), p. 69.

Meyer argues to the same conclusion on the basis of the practical identity of the Hebrew and Egyptian scheme of interpretation of the world's progress and goal. Summing it all up he says:

I think, then, that there can be no doubt but that this scheme, the material content of all prophecy, was derived from Egypt. Not that the prophets themselves came from Egypt—they were rather Canaanitish in origin; and just as little under Egyptian influence were the individual dreamers like Amos and Hosea, who indeed were not prophets and did not wish to be so classified (Am. 7:14). But the history which was staged in the future and formed the content of Egyptian prophecies wandered into Palestine just like other pretty stories, such as the tales used for the story of Joseph, and there it was repeated and believed with readiness, just as the Arabs narrated for themselves in the time of Mohammed the beautiful stories of the Jews and Christians and the promises for the return therewith associated (and parallel thereto the stories of the Persian hero-legends). Upon these traditional stories of the future did the great Hebrew prophets lay hold and they made them the basis of their preaching and thereby filled them with a wholly different spiritual content. It was exactly the same course through which centuries later in the same regions the Babylonian myths of the fight with the Dragon in the primaeval age were transformed into a story of the future and became the basis of eschatology and were interpreted with reference to the present and immediately ensuing history of the Jewish and later of the Christian church. Only in the latter case the spirit which filled the Old Testament prophets was lacking.¹

It is perhaps not without significance in this connection that the Egyptian sun-god, Re, was given credit for a great concern for righteousness and justice. This is precisely the phase of religion that was emphasized by the Hebrew prophets. If prophecy drew any inspiration from Egypt, directly or indirectly, it certainly would have been most natural for its spokesmen to have laid hold upon this ethical message.

We now turn our attention to facts from within Israel's own borders which point to the great influence of the southern clans upon the origin and development of Yahwism in Israel. The religion of the region to the south of Judah necessarily was nomadic or semi-nomadic. The conditions of existence there rendered any other kind of life impracticable. The fact has long been emphasized that the

¹ *Die Israeliten*, pp. 454 ff.; see also Gunkel, *Reden und Aufsätze* (1913), p. 139, and Gressmann, "The Sources of Israel's Messianic Hope," *American Journal of Theology*, XVII (1913), 191 ff.

ideals of early prophecy were nomadic.¹ Canaanitish Baalism was agricultural in its spirit and point of view. The Baalim were the gods of civilization. Yahweh was thought of by the prophets as opposed to the practice and progress of civilization. The progress of civilization was in their eyes a progress in sin. This struggle between Yahweh and the Baalim for supremacy is the outstanding fact in Israel's religious history, at least from the time of Elijah and Elisha to the days of Hosea. This gives significance to the tradition that Elijah's Yahweh controlled the rainfall to the confusion of Ahab and the priests of Baal. This accounts likewise for Yahweh functioning as champion of the nomadic passion for democratic freedom as over against the despotic autocracy of Ahab and Jezebel. In such a movement Jonadab ben Rechab, whom a certain group contemporary with Jeremiah regarded as their founder (Jer., chap. 36), found himself thoroughly at home, and to it he lent the approval of his presence. He was a nomad *par excellence* and impressed the importance of the nomadic life upon his successors for generations. Interestingly enough, the Rechabite program accorded in several respects with the manner of life of the marauding Nabataeans of a much later day,² who came from the same region as the Rechabites, Kenites, and the Egyptian wing of Israel.

This nomadic ideal is reflected also in the use of the Tent of Meeting, which was a distinctively nomadic shrine. It appears again repeatedly in the J document, which is quite generally accepted as a southern or Judaic writing. J's story of early history is written in the ardent conviction that the life and religion of the nomad is the only right life and that every departure therefrom is apostasy from Yahweh and righteousness.³ The anti-Baal program appears prominently in the utterances of Hosea. It is evident that in his day the struggle was on in full strength in Northern Israel. The simple question as to whether the fruits of the earth were the gift of Yahweh or of the Baalim is a burning issue. We are not confronted here with two conceptions of Yahweh, as is too frequently maintained.⁴ It is

¹ See especially Budde, *Preuss. Jahrbücher* (1896); Marti, *Die Religion des A.T.* (1906), pp. 13-24.

² See Diodorus xix. 94; Meyer, *Die Israeliten*, p. 84.

³ Cf. Meyer, *Die Israeliten*, p. 139.

⁴ See, e.g., W. R. Harper, *Amos and Hosea (ICC)*, p. 228.

not one view of Yahweh in opposition to another that Hosea is defending, but rather the view that Yahweh must displace the Baalim in the thought and affection of Israel. The language is too definite and the feeling too intense for this to be a mere discussion of forms and ceremonies or an arraignment of an opposing theology; it is nothing less than a life-and-death struggle between two gods.

This situation inevitably gives rise to a question. Northern Israel had been settled by the Hebrews for centuries, probably as early as *ca.* 1500 B.C. Did it require a period of from five to seven hundred years for Yahweh to become acclimated or domesticated in Canaan? Is it possible that the Hebrews took Yahweh with them into Canaan at the time of their first entry and that ever since he had been struggling for mastery over the Baalim? Or if that seem too improbable, is it to be supposed that Yahweh went into Canaan with the first Hebrew immigrants, that he raised no protest against the Baalim until after centuries of residence, but finally arose in his indignation and expelled them from their own house? What influence could possibly have caused him suddenly to manifest those nomadic tendencies which must have lain long dormant in Canaan or, on the other hand, suddenly to have asserted his sole rights in the sphere in which the Baalim had thus far been exclusive proprietors? Is it not on the whole more probable that with the later Hebrews coming in from the South there came a new Yahweh, or a new conception of Yahweh so different from the original as to be practically a new God?

This latter view would account in part for the fact that Baalism seems not to have had as firm a hold upon or as large a place in Judah as in the northern kingdom: Amos, a citizen of the South, even when preaching in the North never mentions the Baalim. Hosea, on the other hand, knowing the North intimately, puts the campaign against the Baalim to the fore. Amos joined him in his protest against the sensuous cultus in general, the product of Canaan's rich civilization, and in particular denounced the treatment that had been meted out to the Nazirites and the prophets, two genuinely nomadic orders. If Yahwism, or a new type of Yahwism, was gradually working its way northward from the far South, Ephraim would naturally be slower in feeling its influence than Judah. Then, too, the political

rupture between the North and South in 933 B.C. and the resulting organization of two independent and hostile kingdoms would act as a retarding obstacle in the way of the northward march of Yahwism. The farthest point, apparently, at which the northern progress of Yahwism arrived was Northern Syria, where we find a king of Hamath in the eighth century carrying the name *Ilu-bidi*, which is interchanged with *Ya'u-bidi*, and a king of *Ya'udi* having the name *Azri-ya'u*. Whether this region obtained Yahu through Israel or whether he was carried thither by some other group that, like Israel, had started out from the Sinai region we are not in a position to determine.¹ But in any case Yahweh does not appear to have made a prominent place for himself in that region; for, as Meyer has noted, he does not appear in the list of the gods of *Ya'udi* given on the Hadad inscription.

The southern home of the new Yahwism and its relatively late entry into Judah, and thence gradually into Ephraim, would account likewise for the fact that Israel continued to think of Yahweh as the God of Sinai. It has always been difficult to understand how Israel, who had come to know Yahweh at Sinai and had known him there but a relatively short time, could possibly have left him at Sinai and made a long detour around the Dead Sea so as to enter Canaan from the east, thus cutting itself off from immediate or continuous connection with Sinai, and yet through it all remained loyal to Yahweh and persisted in associating him with that far-off shrine. But with Yahweh entering Canaan as the God of the southern clans coming up through Judah, the situation is entirely different and wholly intelligible. It is not likely that Judah was ever cut off from the Sinai-Kadesh region; its limits were contiguous to Judah proper; and the connection with the ancient shrine and the desert God remained unbroken and vital.

The southern origin and northern progress of the new Yahwism also explains, as Professor Luckenbill pointed out recently,² the fact noted by G. Buchanan Gray,³ viz., that Yahweh-names do not begin to flourish among the Hebrews until about the time of David. The

¹ See Meyer, *Die Israeliten*, pp. 244 f.

² Viz., "On Israel's Origins," *American Journal of Theology*, XXII (1918), 46 f.

³ *Hebrew Proper Names* (1896), pp. 257 ff.

name of Moses' mother, Jochebed (יֹכֶבֶד), is attested only by P and must not be taken too seriously. The name of Moses' successor, Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ), is but a later development from the older form Hosea (הוֹשִׁיעַ; see Num. 13:16; cf. Num. 13:8; Deut. 32:44, and ע in I Sam. 6:14). In the Book of Joshua there does not appear a single name compounded with Yahweh or any form of it. In Judges there are but two such names, viz., Joash, Gideon's father (Judg. 6:29), and Micah (Judg., chap. 17).¹ In the two Books of Samuel, out of the scores of names found therein, less than a dozen are compounds of Yahweh.² For example, out of the catalogue of David's mighty men in II Sam., chap. 23, where forty-three names in all occur, only two (Benaiah and Jonathan, II Sam. 23:30 f.) contain the name Yahweh. Of the seventeen or more sons of David himself, only three honor Yahweh in this way, viz., Adonijah, Shephatiah, and Jedidiah; and the last-mentioned name was the prophet Nathan's substitute for Solomon. When the scarcity of Yahweh-names in this early period is contrasted with the increasing frequency of such formations from the time of Amos on, its significance cannot be ignored. Even the pre-disruption prophets do not bear the name of Yahweh, to wit: Deborah, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan. Yahweh evidently had not come into vogue; he was not yet the style. Of the kings of Northern Israel the only possible cases of the use of Yahweh as part of the name prior to Amos are Ahaziah and Jehoram, sons of Ahab, and Jehoahaz, son of Jehu. In Judah, up to the same time, there were Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah (or Uzziah). The mere comparison tells the story. A part of the same story is the fact that the E document is generally assigned to the northern kingdom. Here

¹ Gray (*Hebrew Proper Names*, p. 157) denies the presence of יהוה in מִיכָה; but see my commentary on Mic. 1:1 (ICC).

² Viz., Abijah (I Sam. 8:1), Jonathan (I Sam. 13:2), Ahijah (I Sam. 14:3), Zeruiah (II Sam. 2:13), Adonijah and Shephatiah (II Sam. 3:4), Mica (II Sam. 9:12), Jedidiah (II Sam. 12:25), Jonadab (II Sam. 15:36), Benaiah and Jehoshaphat (II Sam. 20:23). Some of these יהוה endings may be but hypocoristic terminations, as Jastrow long ago suggested (*JBL*, XIII [1894], 101-27; cf. Luckenbill, *American Journal of Theology*, XXII, 49, note). In addition to Abijah = Abijam, we find Ahijah of the Old Testament paralleled by Ahijam of the letter of Istar-wasur of Taanach; בְּעֵלְיָה (I Chron. 12:5); cf. Ba (?) *lijāma* (*Babyl. Exped. of the University of Pennsylvania*, X, 41); מְרִיָם (ע Μαριαμ; Μαρια, Matt. 1:18; Μαριαμ, Matt. 13:55). ע in such forms as 'Aβῆias, 'Oβῆias, 'Hεῖου, 'Iερεμίας, 'Hσαίας (cf. *Jas'e'jāma*, in Tallqvist, *Neubabyl. Namenbuch*, p. 68), shows no consciousness of the presence of a divine name.

the name אֱלֹהִים is characteristic, whereas in the southern document J the name Yahweh is dominant.

The outside witnesses to the religion of early Israel tell the same tale—Mesha of Moab, in his famous record of his contest with Northern Israel, bears testimony to the fact that Yahweh was at least not the only God worshiped by his foes. He tells, among other things, how he not only plundered and desecrated a shrine of Yahweh at an Israelitish town called Nebo, but that he carried off the altar-hearth of אֱלֹהִים from the town of Ataroth and exhibited it in triumph before Chemosh. In similar fashion the ostraka from Samaria, which belong to about the period of Ahab, exhibit (so far as they have yet been published)¹ as many Baal-compounds as Yahweh-compounds. In addition to these they show compounds with still other gods, such as Gad and Melek. The earlier Old Testament documents when closely scrutinized yield exactly the same kind of material, showing that the Hebrews prior to Amos worshiped not only the Baalim but also a wide range of additional deities.² Yahweh was not moving into a vacant house, but into an already overpopulated tenement.

It has long been recognized that Judah was not the first part of Canaan to be Hebraicized but rather the last. The northern clans had settled in Ephraim for many generations before the clans from Egypt and the Negeb moved into Judah. This newer view regarding the entry of the southern clans into Israel's life is well summed up in a paragraph from Meyer's *Israeliten*:³

I believe, therefore, that we have every reason to look upon the southern clans as a unit and to catalogue Judah, Simeon, and Levi, as well as Kenaz (Caleb), Korah, Cain (with Amalek) and Zerah, with the Edomite, or if the expression be preferable, with the Edomite-Ishmaelite clans, which from the twelfth century on had established themselves to the south of the Dead Sea,⁴ on both sides of the 'Arabah, and from that base had pressed on toward the civilized land of Palestine. At first the dominance lay with the semi-nomads in the hill country of Seir, where there developed for a time a quite

¹ *Harvard Theological Review*, IV (1911), 136 ff.

² See H. P. Smith, "Theophorous Proper Names in the Old Testament," *AJSL*, XXIV, 34-61; C. H. Toy, "Polytheism in Genesis as a Mark of Date," *Essays in Modern Theology and Related Subjects* (Briggs Anniversary Volume, 1911), pp. 1-12.

³ P. 446.

⁴ Cf. Müller (*Mittheilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* [1907], pp. 1-40), who claims that the Judaic clans were settled in the South already in the days of Thutmose III, 1501-1447 B.C.

significant Edomite kingdom. Later on, Judah, the most advanced of these clans, gradually came to the fore, passed over into agricultural settlement, and by means of the higher civilization and its resources finally achieved a strong politico-military organization. It won a dominant position, however, only when it entered into closer relations with its northern neighbors, the Israelites, and indeed, for a time, through the significant personalities which it produced in David and Joab, won leadership over them. Thereby was it placed in a position to reduce its southern neighbors, the Edomites, to subjection.

The question arises at once as to how the late comers succeeded in imposing their own type of religion upon their northern brethren. The latter had been settled a long time; they had acquired the essential elements of Canaanitish civilization; they were naturally much stronger, richer, and more cultured than the new immigrants. We recall, however, that the North had suffered many things at the hands of foes who envied them their possession of the rich arable lands furnished by the plain of Esdraelon and the less hilly regions of the North in comparison with the South. Indeed, the promising young kingdom of Saul was completely prostrated by the crushing defeat on Mount Gilboa. This was the crucial moment for the South, and the ambitious and vigorous David was quick to see and to seize his opportunity. The superior fighting powers of the vigorous southerners from the hill country easily established their leadership over the North, at least for a time. The brilliant and prosperous reign of David did wonders in commending the southern Yahwism to the northern clans, even as the military success of Mohammed was his most effective missionary agency. But the full triumph of Yahwism even in the South awaited the coming of the great prophetic personalities with an ethical message regarding a God whose supreme interest and undeniable demand was justice. The recognition of the relatively late appearance of ethical Yahwism among the Hebrews involves elevating the prophets to a higher pedestal than even their most enthusiastic admirers have heretofore dared to dream. They now appear as innovators, newcomers in an old established order of religion, a religion deeply intrenched in the hearts of the people and having the sanction of the centuries behind it. They appear as representatives of a stringently severe simplicity in opposition to a complex and elaborate cultus, which furnished a means

of livelihood to an extensive order of priests, whom they charge with living on the sin of Yahweh's people. They expound an almost puritanical type of purity to a people steeped in a religion of sensuality under the lead of gods who functioned as the procreators of fertility. They demand a rigid, impartial, and democratic justice in the name of a desert God from a people who have acquired and rejoice in a civilization that creates a thirst for power and a lust for wealth. They undertake to displace gods whose tenure of the land antedates history, and to replace them by a practically unknown God whose history is but of yesterday. This was a task requiring the strength, courage, and faith of spiritual giants for its successful completion. And the prophets succeeded.

In estimating the strength of the evidence for the southern origin and northern progress of ethical Yahwism, we must not fail to reckon with the fact that Samaria fell in 721 B.C. and that all our records of the religion of the North are such as have been through the hands of later editors from the South. These editors were the exponents of a highly developed Yahwism and their purpose was to produce a literature that should be effective in inculcating proper conceptions of Yahweh among their contemporaries. It goes without saying, therefore, that they would eliminate pretty thoroughly material that testified to the worship of other gods than Yahweh by the heroes of Israel, and would retouch the history in such a way as to make it reflect glory upon Yahweh from the beginning of time. It is only because they did not carry through their task to perfection in every minute detail that we are able even to make reasonable conjectures about the religion of the early Hebrews.

The view that ethical Yahwism and its prophets came into Canaan from the South at a relatively late period makes it possible to account for the contrast between the early religion of the Hebrews, which was relatively primitive, as the records in Judges and Samuel show, and their civilization, which was relatively advanced. The Israelites of the North had been in the school of civilization for centuries before the appearance of the newer Yahwism. They had had abundance of time in which to learn the arts and crafts, the laws and usages, the economic processes and social institutions and conventions of civilized life. But they had taken with these things in like manner

the religious standards and customs of the times. They had not progressed beyond their fellows nor segregated themselves from them religiously. The new religion of Yahweh, when it appears, is grafted upon this stock or planted in this fertile soil. It brings with it much that is new to Canaan, which it has acquired in the nomadic regions of the southland, and perhaps more that has come to it there from across the Red Sea. But it has much yet to learn and Canaan has much to give. It is the union of these different elements that produces the religion of the prophets, a profoundly ethical religion rooted in civilization and capable of indefinite expansion and enrichment, through its ability to make the adjustments called for by the constantly changing forms of political and social life. The progress of Yahwism was relatively rapid after its incorporation into the fabric of Israel's life. This was in part because Israel had been prepared by the long and slow process of civilization for an intelligent reception and appreciation of the new religion, and in part because the nomadic simplicity and idealism of primitive Yahwism was early supplemented and enriched by contact with the intellectual vigor and social outlook of the sages and seers of Egypt.